

Message

---

**From:** Seppi, Pat [Seppi.Pat@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 2/22/2022 2:55:12 PM  
**To:** Seppi, Pat [Seppi.Pat@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Article: Citizen group presses EPA for aggressive cleanup of toxic Superfund landfill in Chatham

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "McBay, Stephen" <Mcbay.Stephen@epa.gov>  
**Date:** February 22, 2022 at 9:44:30 AM EST  
**To:** "Seppi, Pat" <Seppi.Pat@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** "Ketu, Rupika" <Ketu.Rupika@epa.gov>, "Fajardo, Juan" <Fajardo.Juan@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** Article: Citizen group presses EPA for aggressive cleanup of toxic Superfund landfill in Chatham

Hi Team, good morning.

I did not see this article in Friday's clips, so I'm circulating for awareness.

Respectfully,  
Stephen

###

## Citizen group presses EPA for aggressive cleanup of toxic Superfund landfill in Chatham

As federal officials near a final decision about the remediation of a toxic Superfund site in Chatham Township, members of the Rolling Knolls Landfill Superfund Community Action Group are pressing the Environmental Protection Agency to choose an aggressive cleanup plan that would allow the public to access the land for passive recreation.

Complicating matters is a mix of private and public ownership of the 170-acre Rolling Knolls site, much of which operated as a landfill until 1968. The EPA placed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in September 2003.

Most of it is owned by the private family Miele Trust. About 35 acres are owned by the Department of the Interior and reside within the 7,700-acre Great Swamp National

Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Green Village Fire Department owns the northeastern portion.

EPA remediation options range from no action to excavating and cleaning the landfill area, estimated at a cost of \$55.4 million.

Sally Rubin of the nonprofit Great Swamp Watershed Association, who took a lead role in an online CAG meeting Tuesday, said the EPA seems to be operating under the assumption that the Miele Trust land would remain privately owned and therefore would not be publicly accessible.



Less foot traffic would allow the EPA to choose a less aggressive, less-expensive remediation plan.

But representatives of Chatham Township, the Great Swamp and the Miele Trust met in July to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that all of the land should ultimately be open "for wildlife conservation and year-round passive recreation."

That would require the township or U.S. Fish and Wildlife to take ownership of the 135-acre Miele tract. But neither entity is willing to do so "unless it was cleaned up to a different standard than the EPA has proposed until now," Rubin said.

**No game:**When turkey vultures turned up dead in Dover, DEP investigated. This is what was discovered

**"Backroom maneuver"?:**Dirty politics behind redraw of electoral wards in Dover? Residents, candidate say yes

Juan Fajardo, representing the EPA on the meeting, said he would like to hear from the property owners. Rubin reminded him the Miele Trust owned the land and signed the MOU, "so I would presume to say they are in support of what it contains."

## Your stories live here.

Fuel your hometown passion and plug into the stories that define it.

Rubin agreed to set up a meeting of the MOU partners, including the Miele Trust, and the EPA to discuss the property owners' intentions for the land.

Fajardo said the EPA was aware of the MOU and would consider it and other public comments before issuing its preferred remedy.

"That's a great non-answer," Rubin said.

The EPA is expected to issue its preferred remedy by the summer of 2023. Prior to that deadline, the EPA will release its final feasibility study and solicit comments from the public.



Another group of business entities, identified by the EPA as Possible Responsible Parties responsible for remediation costs, has formally objected to the MOU.

Attorneys for the group, which includes Chevron Environmental Management Company, Nokia of America and Novartis Pharmaceuticals, wrote a letter to the CAG claiming the MOU "constitutes a tortious interference with the group's settlement agreement and release and restrictive covenant with the Miele Trust."

The CAG will meet again on March 29.

New Jersey has the most Superfund sites of any state, 114 as of Feb. 1 identified by the Environmental Protection Agency as contaminated with hazardous substances that threaten public health or the environment. Morris County has 10 of those sites, more than 12 states.

Nationwide, approximately \$4.7 billion has been spent on Superfund site investigations and cleanups. Most of the money comes from a special account funded by settlement payments with "potentially responsible parties" believed to have caused the contamination.

More than \$8.2 billion has been made available in special accounts through the deposit of funds from PRP settlements the EPA said.

**Stephen McBay**  
**Public Information Officer**  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2  
Public Affairs Office  
290 Broadway – 26<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 637-3672  
[mcbay.stephen@epa.gov](mailto:mcbay.stephen@epa.gov)